



## ***AOT in Action***

### ***TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

#### **A Message from the Director:**

Good afternoon.

Last week, I joined several national state tourism directors and industry partners in Washington, D.C., for the annual Tourism Industry Association (TIA) meeting. TIA is the tourism industry's national advocacy group. The association is a tremendous asset as it provides updated information on travel and tourism trends, and keeps the needs of our industry top-of-mind with key federal legislatures.

During this meeting, I was nominated by the board of the National Council of State Tourism Directors to serve on TIA's executive committee. While I'm thrilled about this nomination, I'm even more excited about the opportunity for Arizona to be nationally represented.

Additionally, the Arizona Tourism Unity Dinner will be held Thursday, March 6, at the Arizona Biltmore Resort. The event is a major fundraiser for the Arizona Tourism Alliance, but also honors individuals for their extraordinary support and service to Arizona's travel and tourism industry. The Unity Dinner is a wonderful event that brings together public and private tourism industry organizations and elected officials from across the state to celebrate tourism.

I hope to see you all there!

Have a great week.

*Margie R. Emmenau*

Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

## **AOT News Flash**

### **Tourism Industry Launches Go See Arizona Social Networking Web Site**

Thousands of visitors from across the United States are traveling to Arizona to enjoy Cactus League Spring Training games. To connect with these visitors, several Arizona tourism leaders worked with GoSeeTell Network in developing [GoSeeArizona.com](http://GoSeeArizona.com), a new social networking travel Web site.

GoSeeArizona.com provides personalized recommendations for hotels, restaurants, attractions, and activities for more than 200 Arizona destinations. The site offers ratings, reviews, photos, videos and other user-generated-content created and shared by Arizona visitors and residents. Recommendations are generated by identifying Arizona experiences that are highly rated by like-minded travelers. Partners on the project include the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), the Greater Phoenix CVB, the Mesa CVB, the Metropolitan Tucson CVB, the Tempe CVB, the Sedona Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Canyon Chamber of Commerce, the City of Chandler, and the Arizona Office of Tourism.

GoSeeArizona.com is part of the GoSeeTell Network, a technology platform that allows destination marketing organizations to offer user-generated-content as part of their online presence. The platform was developed and is managed by GoSeeTell Network Inc., a travel technology provider. For more information, visit [www.GoSeeTell.com](http://www.GoSeeTell.com).

For more information, please contact Troy Thompson, Senior Manager Interactive Marketing, at 602-364-3722 or via e-mail at [tthompson@azot.gov](mailto:tthompson@azot.gov).

### **AOT's Research Section has been Updated**

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov).

- Lodging Performance 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007
- Lodging Performance 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007 (By County)
- Lodging Performance Year End 2007
- Lodging Performance Year End 2007 (By County)
- Lodging Performance January 2008
- Lodging Performance January 2008 (By County)

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at [bbillings@azot.gov](mailto:bbillings@azot.gov).

### **SAVE the DATE: AOT's TEAM Grant Workshop March 14**

The FY09 Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing grants guidelines are now available. TEAM is a matching-grant program offered to statewide destination marketing organizations and

tribal entities to help develop or enhance their local marketing efforts. This grant program works in conjunction with AOT's national and regional advertising efforts encouraging a partnership between Arizona communities and AOT to help maintain a strong tourism industry throughout the Grand Canyon State. **Applications are due to the office for review by April 18, 2008.**

To download a copy of the guidelines please visit [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov). For FY09, AOT is encouraging TEAM applicants to develop strategic and innovative projects by providing a direct incentive of up to \$5,000 (no matching funds required), for projects that incorporate one of the following AOT initiatives: Branding, Arizona Origins or Go Green. Please read the FY09 TEAM Guidelines for specific information regarding eligibility for this new initiative.

FY09 TEAM grant applicants will be required to attend the TEAM workshop scheduled on March 14, 2008. If you have questions or need additional information regarding the FY09 TEAM grant program, please contact Glenn Schlottman at 602-364-3727 or [gschlottman@azot.gov](mailto:gschlottman@azot.gov).

#### **TEAM Workshop**

March 14, 2008

10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Tempe Center for the Arts

700 W. Rio Salado Parkway

Tempe, AZ 85281

## **Trippin' with AOT**

### **AOT Participates in Southern California AAA Sales Mission**

AOT recently participated in a sales mission with several Arizona Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs) targeting AAA offices in the Southern California region. The week began with a visit to the call center in Costa Mesa. AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Specialist, Kristy Swanson, and representatives from Chandler Tourism, Cochise County, Flagstaff, Mesa, Tempe, Scottsdale and Yuma CVBs all hosted a catered lunch and a mini trade show for the call center staff. The delegation distributed materials from their respective organizations as well as held a prize drawing for three lucky winners who received a trip to Arizona. The rest of the week, the Arizona delegates visited AAA offices by splitting into four teams covering the southern region of California. In all, the delegation provided new Arizona information to more than 700 travel agents and auto travel representatives. For more information please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at [kswanson@azot.gov](mailto:kswanson@azot.gov).

### **AOT Hosts AAA FAM Tour**

AOT's Travel Industry Marketing division recently hosted eight AAA/CAA travel agents on a familiarization tour entitled "Historical Treasures of Arizona." Two of the agents were from Niagara Falls, Ontario the rest of the group were from the United States representing Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Only two agents had previously visited Arizona. This very well-received familiarization tour made stops in Flagstaff, Kingman, Lake Havasu City, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Williams and highlighted attractions and hotels such as the Arizona Grand Resort, El Tovar, the Heard Museum, the Grand Canyon Railway, the Grand Canyon National Park, the London Bridge Resort, the Museum of Northern Arizona, the Rte. 66 Museum, and the Riordan Mansion State Historic Park. For more information please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at [kswanson@azot.gov](mailto:kswanson@azot.gov).

## Industry News

### National Park Visits Rose Last Year

More than 275 million visits were recorded in America's national park system in 2007, an increase of 3 million from the previous year. "Despite rising gasoline prices and the lure of electronic entertainment, this is great news," said National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar. "With all the recreational choices available, national parks still draw more visits than Major League Baseball, the National Football League, professional basketball, soccer and NASCAR combined." At 17.35 million, the Blue Ridge Parkway recorded the highest number of visits in the National Park System last year. Golden Gate National Recreation Area was second, with 14.4 million visits. Gateway National Recreation Area was third at 8.8 million, followed by Lake Mead National Recreation Area at 7.6 million visits and Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area at 4.8 million visits.

The 58 national parks were the most popular park category in 2007, with 62.3 million visits. Among the more popular national parks, Great Smoky Mountains National Park recorded 9.3 million visitors, the Grand Canyon 4.4 million, Yosemite 3.5 million, and Yellowstone 3.1 million. Nineteen parks recorded one million or more visits in 2007. (*Special to TA*)

### Weak Dollar Draws European Visitors

The U.S. received 1.5 million more visitors from abroad last year than in 2006 as the weak U.S. dollar lured more Europeans interested in exercising their increased buying power. Last year, the U.S. received an estimated 23.2 million visits from outside North America, up almost 7 percent from 2006, according to a Commerce Department estimate. Visits by Western European, the largest source of overseas visitors, were up 8 percent for the year. The Travel Industry Association is pressing Congress to establish a nationally coordinated promotional campaign to attract foreign visitors. "Despite the fact that America is on sale, (because of exchange rates), we welcomed fewer overseas visitors in 2007 than we did in 1997, said Roger Dow, CEO at TIA. (*Page 1B, USA Today*)

### Travelocity to Power TIA Web Site

The Travel Industry Association has named Travelocity as the online travel platform for DiscoverAmerica.com, the official travel and tourism Web site of the U.S. Travelocity will provide online hotel reservation services beginning this spring for the Web site's five initial markets: the U.K., Germany, Canada, Mexico and Japan. DiscoverAmerica.com, which is being developed through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce, is aimed to reach the top five inbound markets in the U.S., which account for about 75 percent of 37 million international visitors to the U.S. each year. DiscoverAmerica.com will feature in-depth content on U.S. states, territories and destinations as well as activities, official entry requirements, a community network and mapping. The site will be available in English for consumers in the U.K. and Canada, and will be fully translated into French, German, Japanese and Spanish for consumers in Canada, Germany, Japan and Mexico. (*www.MiMegasite.com, 2/27; www.TravelWeekly.com, 2/27; Special to TA*)

### NTA China Inbound Program Approved

The Chinese National Tourism Administration has approved the National Tour Association's China Inbound Program proposal. Under the agreement, NTA will provide the CNTA with a list of tour operators qualified to organize and conduct leisure group travel from China to the U.S. The program will assist NTA tour operators in working with Chinese travel agencies to organize and market group leisure tours to the U.S. In December, the U.S. and China signed a

Memorandum of Understanding that provides the necessary framework to permit Chinese group leisure travel to the U.S.. In addition, U.S. travel destinations will be able to market their brands in China. Details at 859-226-4418. (*Special to TA*)

### **TIA Pushes Visa Waiver Program on Hill**

Roger Dow, president and CEO of the Travel Industry Association, has submitted written testimony to the subcommittee on tourism, technology and homeland security of the Senate Judiciary Committee at a hearing on weaknesses in the Visa Waiver Program. In his statement, Dow called for expeditious and effective implementation of the Visa Waiver Program reforms enacted by Congress last year that would provide added security to the program, improve U.S. diplomacy and drive new economic spending. "TIA strongly believes that the Visa Waiver Program reforms will have a positive impact on the U.S. economy at a time when generating economic growth is a top priority, and on America's public diplomacy efforts around the world," Dow said. An increase of 10 million more visitors annually could create 190,000 jobs, \$16.5 billion in new spending and nearly \$3 billion in new tax revenue, TIA said. (*www.ModernAgent.com; Special to TA*)

### **Survey: Newspaper Inserts Grab More Attention Than TV**

Newspaper inserts and circulars are more attention-grabbing than TV advertising, according to the latest Customer Focus survey from Vertis Communications. Vertis, which supplies print advertising and direct marketing vehicles for retailers and consumer services companies, has been conducting the annual telephone survey since 1998 reports Marketing Daily. In this year's survey, conducted on a representative sample of 3,000 adult U.S. consumers, 47 percent said that inserts/circulars best capture their attention, 43 percent cited television ads and 38 percent cited newspaper display ads. That represented a 9 percent increase for inserts, a 10 percent decrease for TV ads and a 7 percent decrease for newspaper ads since the 2003 survey. In addition, 27 percent said that inserts/circulars are the ad vehicles most likely to directly impact buying decisions, versus 19 percent for TV ads, 12 percent for newspaper display ads, 9 percent for the Internet, 6 percent for catalogs, 5 percent for direct mail, 4 percent for magazines, 2 percent for radio and just 1 percent for e-mail promotions.